

EXHIBIT 8

POLITICO**ELECTIONS****Trumpworld's next target: Building a dark-money machine**

A summit is planned for next month in Palm Beach, where conservative donors will plot to inject hundreds of millions into boosting candidates and causes aligned with the former president.

POLITICO

The summit is being sponsored by the Conservative Partnership Institute, an organization led by Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. | Alex Brandon/AP Photo

By **ALEX ISENSTADT**

03/24/2021 10:57 AM EDT



Liberals spent years building a massive dark-money machine. Now conservatives are trying to match them.

Major donors are convening at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort next month for a two-day gathering to talk about what went wrong in 2020 — and to build a big-dollar network to take back power.

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The summit is being sponsored by the Conservative Partnership Institute, an organization led by Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and former Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.). Trump is slated to headline the opening-night dinner, and the agenda includes an array of conservative luminaries and former Trump administration officials such as Stephen Miller, Russ Vought and Ric Grenell.

they've come to acknowledge a massive deficit: the lack of a dark-money infrastructure that can be pivotal to influencing elections and policy fights. Organizers say the gathering is aimed at creating a long-term blueprint for funding policy-focused nonprofits in order to compete with liberals who, through mega-donors like George Soros and Tom Steyer, have developed a well-oiled system for routing cash to a web of big-spending advocacy groups.

“After the most cataclysmic election of modern history, investors and organizers must come together and talk about how and what happened in order to map out an ambitious plan to rebuild conservative power in the states and defend our values against the assault on our election systems,” the agenda for the CPI meeting says.

It warns that “liberal donors and organizations have increasingly turned to nonprofit, tax-deductible avenues as a lever for change,” and says it’s “time conservative-aligned donors and political leaders take a hard look at the way philanthropy can best achieve conservative public policy victories.”

“We must bring new funds to incubate and anchor conservative organizations that can compete with the Left’s barrage of public-private spending,” the agenda says.

Republicans have long been active in creating super PACs, which can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money on elections. But in recent years they’ve been outmatched in the creation of nonprofits, which are more restricted in their ability to spend money on elections but can still raise vast sums to



groups directed more than \$500 million in dark money to benefit Democratic candidates in the 2020 election, compared to only \$200 million from conservative groups.

Conservatives point to the web of liberal nonprofits that played key roles in the 2020 elections, such as Fair Fight, an organization focused on voting rights. The Georgia-based group, which was founded by Democrat Stacey Abrams, has been credited with helping Democrats win a slate of victories there.

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The Meadows-backed CPI, which was founded in 2017 with the mission of providing support to conservative nonprofits, is expected to help spearhead the new push. The organization is partnering with several newly launched groups [helmed by former Trump administration officials](#), including the Center for American Restoration , which is overseen by Vought, and the American Cornerstone Institute, which is led by former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson.



launch a legal nonprofit focused on combating President Joe Biden's administration.

Save America Alliance, a just-formed organization that is slated to host a welcome reception on the opening night of the event, is also expected to be a major player in the effort. The outfit is being conceived as the answer to [Democracy Alliance](#), a secretive network of Democratic billionaires who coordinate their giving to liberal groups. Democracy Alliance, [which was founded in 2005](#) and whose membership includes Soros and Steyer, was credited with directing [\\$600 million to liberal causes](#) during the 2018 midterm elections.



donors, describing itself as an “invitation-only, membership-based organization” whose “goal is to build a vibrant donor community that comes together to strategically invest in America First organizations, issue advocacy groups and candidates.”

The Trump-aligned outfit isn’t being designed to spend money itself on political activities, but rather to help major givers coordinate their donations to an array of vehicles — including nonprofits, candidates and super PACs.

“By joining our network of America First donors across the country, your investments and impact will go much further than ever before,” the prospectus says.

It says members are asked to spend a minimum of \$100,000 annually on recommended entities and states that the network’s goal is to inject more than \$100 million into conservative causes over the next four years. Save America Alliance staffers “will meet with organizations and candidates to assess their viability,” and also “closely monitor and make contribution recommendations for primary challenges of candidates that actively fought to impair President Trump and his America First agenda.”

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According to the document, Save America Alliance is planning several meetings this year, including an October conference in Washington, D.C., where members will be able to hear from the network's endorsees.

Save America Alliance's founder is Caroline Wren, a longtime Republican fundraiser who worked on Trump's reelection campaign and has also served as the finance director for Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). The organization's formation was first reported by The New York Times on Twitter.



CONFERENCE IS 'REFLECTIONS ON 2020' — WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW:

Wren will also participate in a breakfast meeting with Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) and conservative attorney Cleta Mitchell, examining how “donors must reexamine their giving to fit into the new model of conservative philanthropic giving to impact public policy.”

The CPI summit, which is scheduled for April 8-9, will also feature a panel discussion on “Playing Offense in 2022,” about how “too often we were caught flat footed playing defense against the left-wing media’s barrage of attacks.”

The conference is expected to draw a number of major Republican givers, including those who served as ambassadors in the Trump administration. The ambassadors are invited to an opening night reception being headlined by Grenell, who was Trump's acting director of national intelligence and is considering a campaign for California governor in the likely recall election later this year.

The meeting overlaps with the Republican National Committee’s donor retreat, which is being held April 9-11 in Palm Beach, Fla. Trump is expected to headline a dinner, and the confab is expected to draw an array of potential 2024 presidential contenders, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.).

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russellvought

Russ Vought is the president of the Center for American Restoration. He most recently was the director of the White House Office of Management and Budget under President Trump. Follow him at @RussVought.

How To Lead The United States Into An American Spring

To those asking where we go from here, there must be one conclusion from the right: The counter assault must be sustained. There is no going back.

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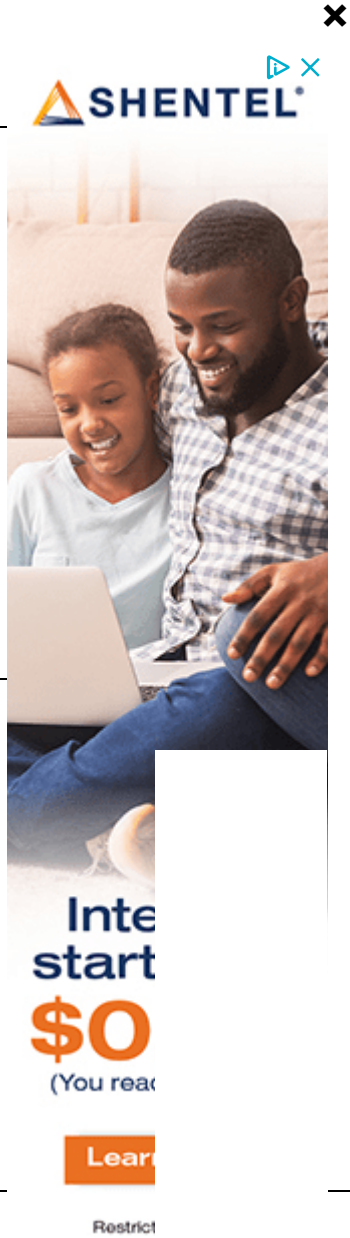
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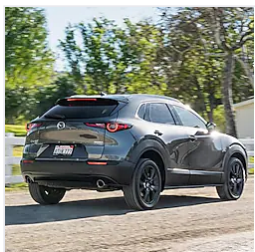
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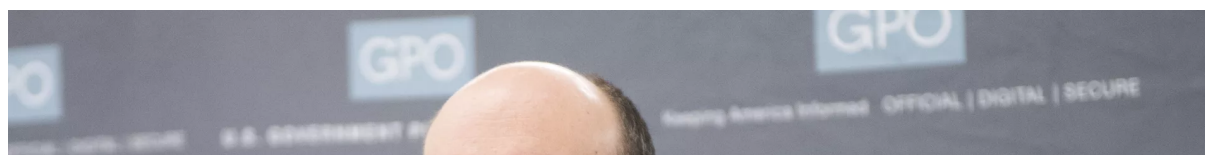
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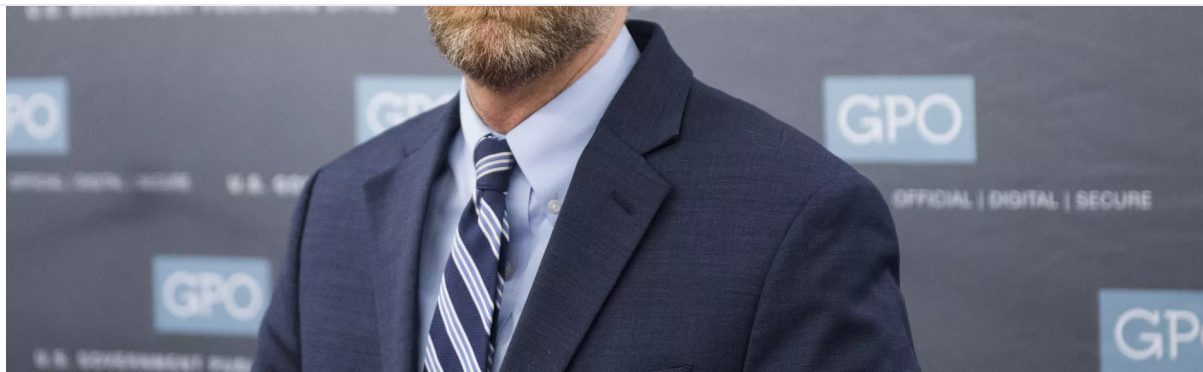
Scoop: Former OMB director to set up Pro-Trump think tanks



Hans Nichols, Lachlan Markay



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OMB Director Russ Vought participates in a photo-op for the printing of President Donald Trump's budget for Fiscal Year 2020 at the Government Publishing Office in Washington on Thursday, March 7, 2019. (Photo By Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call)

Russ Vought, who led Donald Trump's Office of Management and Budget, plans to announce two pro-Trump organizations Tuesday, aiming to provide the ideological ammunition to sustain Trump's political movement after his departure from the White House.

Why it matters: The Center for American Restoration and an advocacy arm, America Restoration Action, will try to keep cultural issues that animated Trump's presidency on the public agenda, according to people familiar with the matter.

What we're hearing: Vought is teaming up in the effort with Rachel Semmel, who ran communications for Trump's OMB, and Ashlea Frazier, his former chief of staff.

- America Restoration Action will be set up as a 501(c)(4) "social welfare" group, with more of a focus on policy advocacy.

The big picture: The ideological direction of the GOP and the larger conservative movement in post-Trump America is yet to be determined.

- With speculation rife about Trump's post-presidency plans, some of his aides have distanced themselves from him and have condemned his comments to a group of protestors that later assaulted the Capitol on Jan. 6.
- But Vought is among those who are staying close to Trump. He's working to ensure that cultural issues that Trump ran on, from transgender rights to critical race theory, remain front and center in the Republican Party and coming elections.





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Jan 27, 2021 - Politics & Policy

Scoop: Mark Meadows' new gig

Mark Meadows at a Make America Great Again rally in October. Photo: Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images

Former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows is joining the Conservative Partnership Institute, a group run by former South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint that operates as a "networking hub" for conservatives, sources familiar with his plans tell Axios.

Between the lines: Meadows, who is still in frequent contact with former

[Skip to main content](#)



Jim Jordan, Ted Cruz, and Josh Hawley — conservative firebrands with strong networks and staffs.

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Jacob Knutson

48 mins ago - Politics & Policy

Off-duty EMT: I was "desperate" to help Floyd but "officers didn't let me into the scene"



An off-duty Minneapolis firefighter and certified EMT testified Tuesday that she was "desperate" to help George Floyd but "the officers didn't let me into the scene."

Driving the news: Genevieve Hansen, who witnessed former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneel on Floyd's neck last May, was among the first witnesses to testify in the trial of Chauvin, who faces murder and manslaughter charges.

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Jonathan Swan
1 hour ago - Politics & Policy

Matt Gaetz says he's under federal investigation for sexual misconduct



Photo: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.), one of the nation's rising-star conservative firebrands, told Axios he is under federal investigation for sexual activity with women, and fears being criminally charged.

What he's saying: "The allegations against me are as searing as they are false," Gaetz said in a 13-minute phone interview with Axios. "I believe that there are people at the Department of Justice who are trying to criminalize my sexual conduct, you know when I was a single guy."

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Democracy Dies in Darkness

Opinion: Conservative populism might finally be getting the intellectual heft it needs

Opinion by **Henry Olsen**

Jan. 28, 2021 at 3:42 p.m. EST



Donald Trump entered his presidency with a clear set of instincts, but little in the way of detailed policy proposals. That cannot continue if the conservative-populist alliance that many on the right envision is to grow and flourish. Thanks to Russ Vought, who served as Trump's director of the Office of Management and Budget, help is on the way.

Vought announced this week that he is starting a new think tank, the Center for American Restoration (CARE), that seeks to fill that void. His endeavor will focus on the full panoply of Trumpian priorities, from immigration to trade to a revised view of U.S. global power. It will also address questions of culture, such as the role of America's Judeo-Christian heritage in public life and the rise of "cancel culture." This amounts to a full-court press on the wide range of issues that animate the new populist conservatism, making CARE unique among all other center-right think tanks.

CARE will also have an issue advocacy subsidiary, American Restoration Action. Organized as a 501(c)(4) under federal tax law, ARA would be able to engage in public campaigns for its ideas. The organization's legal classification would allow it to run issue ad campaigns linked to candidates for federal office, either by asking people to congratulate someone for supporting good ideas or (more commonly) calling them out for backing bad ones. It would also be able to recruit supporters across the country and encourage them to take action through coordinated activity. Americans for Prosperity, a similar advocacy group founded by the famous Koch brothers, has become an influential player on the right through its ability to mobilize grass-roots volunteers and activists in all 50 states. ARA could easily rise to this level of power given the huge numbers of enthusiastic backers of Trump's agenda.

Conservative populism has long needed institutions such as this to flesh out the ideas that a serious governing movement needs. Parties do not have the incentives or infrastructure to engage in serious policy development; think tanks and universities play that role in both parties, and the paucity of conservatives within academia makes think tanks a crucial source of policy depth for Republicans.

Most conservative policy experts, however, are part of the establishment that conservative populism opposes. They have developed the neo-libertarian economic policies that need correcting. They helped create the overextended American empire that fights too many foes with too few resources. And they

Case 1:21-cv-00400-AJT-TCB Document 2-8 Filed 04/06/21 Page 30 of 31 PageID# 403

have neglected the questions of culture and religion that are so important to a modern center-right. Accordingly, the center-right's institutions are largely silent when it comes to supplying serious ideas to politicians who voice populist conservative ideals.

Vought's background suggests he's the right man for the job. OMB is one of the most important federal agencies. Its role in producing the president's annual budget means Vought has a broad understanding of all federal activities. Before OMB, Vought served as policy director for the House Republican Conference and as executive director of the Republican Study Committee, giving him deep experience in creating policy and working with legislators. He also spent seven years as a vice president at the advocacy arm of the conservative Heritage Foundation. This combination of policy chops and grass-roots experience is exactly what a group such as CARE needs.

Independence from Trump's own orbit is also crucial to the conservative-populist cause. Beltway insiders often view Trump as sui generis, failing to recognize that his power stems from the fact that he voices preexisting concerns rather than manufacturing them out of whole cloth. Those who want this type of movement must build something separate from the former president's own ambitions that informs people directly and educates policymakers who have their own aspirations.

Vought's group is not the only one tilling this soil. Oren Cass's think tank, American Compass, does fine work in economic policy, and two quarterly intellectual journals — Julius Krein's American Affairs and Yuval Levin's National Affairs — produce must-read articles on a panoply of issues from a conservative and populist bent. Other institutions feature the work of often solitary voices that push ideas firmly of the right but outside mainstream conservative consensus. Together, they are making the case for a conservative reformation that, if it bears fruit, is also likely to generate political realignment and national renewal.

Trump's own future is the talk of today's political class. Underneath the radar, however, the real story is the development of a Trumpian future, shorn of his eccentricities and bad character and married to a deep longing in the American soul for a meaningful and inclusive vision of citizenship. Vought's CARE and groups like it will play a crucial role in bringing this dream to fruition.

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